

MINUTES
of the
OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ADVISORY GROUP (OHVAG)
of
ARIZONA STATE PARKS
MEETING OF ~~October 30, 2009~~
Graham County General Services Building

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 1:04pm. Members introduced themselves by way of roll call and Mr. Baldwin announced a quorum.

Committee Members Present: Hank Rogers (H)
Drew John (DJ)
Pete Pfeifer (P)
Robert Biegel (BB)
David Moore (D)
John Savino (J) (via teleconference)
Rebecca Antle (BA) (via teleconference)

Arizona State Parks (ASP) Staff: Bob Baldwin, Grants Coordinator (SP)
Annie McVay, State Trails Coordinator (via teleconference)

Other Individuals Present: Bill Gibson, BLM State Office (via teleconference) (G)
Deborah Morris, BLM Safford Field Office (arrived later)

B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF

This was addressed in the Roll Call.

C. ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of Minutes from the August 7, 2009 meeting.
Biegel moved and Moore seconded motion to approve minutes. There was no further discussion. Minutes were approved as presented.

2. POTENTIAL TRAINING AND WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

Annie McVay described a project she is working on to develop some training opportunities that would benefit motorized and non-motorized constituents together and separately. She will be developing the trainings over the next few months and asked OHVAG to provide a couple of people to represent motorized interests. David Moore and Bob Biegel were selected to represent OHVAG in those discussions. They will be asked to provide a report on the developments of this project at future OHVAG meetings.

3. BLM STATEWIDE OHV PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Bill Gibson provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the accomplishments of the Statewide Coordinated Agency OHV Project and

provided commentary via phone conference. The project was funded in 2003 with approximately \$1.5 million in RTP and OHV funds. Questions followed the presentation:

P – Were any areas in southern Arizona inventoried or signed, i.e. Empire Cienega?

G – Those areas were done around 2000 with an earlier grant and were signed at that time.

P – Did you hit any other areas in southern Arizona with this grant?

G – We inventoried and signed the Arivaipa area in the Gila District and just south and east of the middle Gila area. Also, areas in the Sonoran District were signed only.

BA – Will you present this at the quarterly meeting of the coalition? I'll send you an email. The meeting is on Nov. 21.

G – I will be out of state on 11/20-21. I will send you a CD or try to make the next meeting in February.

H – When will maps/ Access Guides be available?

G – I'm hoping to get Arivaipa out by the end of this year. The other guides will be out in the first six to eight months of next year.

H – Where will the maps be available?

G – I will send copies to OHVAG. They will be available at the Outdoor Information Center in downtown Phoenix and at our field offices.

DJ – Is there one place where a person can order all of the maps without going to each field office?

G – They will all be available at the Outdoor Information Center. They will be available on line, but printing them on 8.5 x 11 or 11 x 14 paper doesn't do them justice.

H – Is RideNow going to put them in their stores?

G – Yes. They will only be printed in small quantities to begin with, but we anticipate frequent reprints.

H – What is the cost for the maps/ Access Guides?

G – BLM charges \$4 per map. RideNow is and may continue to give them away.

H – Great job! I'm glad to see this happening.

SP – I would like to commend Bill on getting this done in a timely manner. He spent \$1.5 in three years. That's hard to do! The project was very dynamic and covered a lot of areas and things and he did a good job of getting it taken care of.

BB – Is the non-signage on the Tonto due to their lack of completed inventory at this point?

G – The inventory is done, but they still need to complete their Travel Management Rule process. They anticipate another year before they will be ready. It may take most of 2010 or 2011 before we can get the maps out.

H – How come State Land didn't want to cooperate?

G – In 2004 we had an agreement with them, but in 2005 they decided they would not be opening the routes. That is changing back again and they want us (BLM) to show main routes across State Land and they will designate them as OHV routes. We will be showing some routes across State Land on the Access Guides.

BA – So, will some of the routes on State Land be shown on the BLM maps?

G – Yes, the ones State Land is designating.

BA – Who will be paying for the sign installation on State Land?

G – State Land is saying if they are allowed to keep their portion of the sticker money, they will be using it to place signs. Right now there are no concrete plans to put route signs on State Land.

BA – So BLM has picked up the cost for inventory on State Land?

G – Yes, it is included in the 1800 miles inventoried so far. And as we get money from other sources to use for inventory, we are allowed to inventory on State Land. But they only want main connecting routes inventoried, routes that connect across jurisdictions or from highways to BLM land. Definitely not 100% comprehensive inventory of existing uses.

4. SELECT A CO-CHAIR FOR THE TASK FORCE BEING CONVENED TO REVISE THE TRAILS HERITAGE FUND AND RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (MOTORIZED PORTION) GRANT APPLICATION MANUALS AND RATING CRITERIA.

Mr. Baldwin explained that this happens after a new State Trails Plan has been approved to ensure that grant and project funds are being allocated to high priority concerns as identified in the plan. It will involve several meetings with both motorized and non-motorized users to discuss issues of common interest. Then the groups will be separated and meet a couple more times to deal with their specific issues. The result will be improvements and clarification to the grant manuals and project selection processes and new rating criteria for the next grant manual that rewards projects that will accomplish goals identified as high priority in the trails plan. Mr. Baldwin provided a timeline for the motorized portion that would allow Parks Board approval of the new criteria in March in time for a grant cycle and project selection for OHVAG review in August and Parks Board funding in September. John Savino nominated David Moore and Rebecca Antle seconded the nomination. Moore was selected to participate on behalf of OHVAG.

5. RECOMMEND NEW MEMBERS TO OHVAG.

Information for two potential members was provided. One applicant did not meet the criteria for the appointment, but was included for the purpose of discussion. This applicant wanted to represent "commercial" interests and was not endorsed by a user group. The Group agreed that it was not appropriate to consider the applicant under the existing criteria. The other applicant was incumbent Pete Pfeifer. Biegel nominated Mr. Pfeifer for reappointment to OHVAG and Moore seconded the nomination. Pfeifer was endorsed by the Group and his appointment recommendation will be forwarded to the Parks Board for action at their November 13, 2009 meeting.

The Group suggested sending the notice of an available position to Game & Fish for distribution. Staff should send the email to Group members to forward through their clubs.

6. SELECT A CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR TO PRESIDE OVER OHVAG IN 2010. Chair Rogers nominated Pete Pfeifer as OHVAG Chair for 2010 and Biegel seconded the nomination. There was no further discussion Pfeifer was selected as Chair. Biegel nominated Rebecca Antle as OHVAG Vice-Chair for 2010 and Savino seconded the nomination. There was no further discussion and Antle was selected as Vice-Chair.

7. OHVAG GOALS FOR 2010.

- Find support for the goal and objectives of OHVAG / Arrange a meeting with the State Parks Director to discuss use of OHV funds and support for the Group
- Maintain Group representation criteria
- Make OHVAG more visible / Get funding for and approval of some kind of identifying uniform for OHVAG members to wear
- Emphasize the positive environmental results from responsible OHV use

DJ – Make sure Legislature & Parks Board are aware of the importance of the sticker (OHV Fund) to continue providing user information, facilities, and safe use messages. It was passed as a “user fee” and not a tax.

H – There are great benefits that will happen because of the bill. We need to go to the Parks Board and let them know we’re not happy that OHV money was taken in the past and has not been replaced. They need to know that when things are better, we expect to get our money and we will go to the legislature if necessary.

BB – I was at the Parks Board meetings and I did not hear that the Legislature has passed anything that would allow the Parks Board to use OHV funds for park operations.

SP – I think that was accomplished by the JLBC (Joint Legislative Budget Committee). Parks had to send them a plan on what they needed to do to keep operating. They then approved use of the OHV funds as part of that plan.

H – When the users see that their money is not going to the purposes promised, they will get to the point where they will not buy the sticker and take a ticket in protest.

DJ – It’s a good program and needs to be supported, respected, and enforced. Don’t give up yet. State is having a bad year and is looking for whatever it can to fix things. OHVAG needs to assert themselves and emphasize the impact OHV recreation has and be more visible. If State Parks needs to do something to demonstrate its leadership role in the OHV community or the program needs to go somewhere it will be embraced.

J – There appear to be three agencies that might support OHVAG: Game & Fish, ADOT and State Parks. Game & Fish's mission is to protect, conserve, develop wildlife resources. BB (boating) We don't seem to fall under ADOT or Parks either. Is there any other agency that would support OHVAG?

BA – I feel that in the last few years G&F has gotten more into access, not only for hunters, but general OHV use, too. Access benefits both groups.

H – I have talked with high level G&F people about taking over the OHV program and they are very receptive.

DJ – I think OHVAG needs to make a presentation to Parks about how we feel. We need to see something happening.

H – Instead of going to the Board, how about going directly to the Director? Let's find out what her thoughts are and then go to the Board if necessary.

DJ – We can't go to the Director as a group as it would create a quorum, i.e. open meeting and allow users to show.

H – Maybe that's not a bad idea because the users need to know that we (OHVAG) are not going to lie down. We want to know what our future is at State Parks. We don't want to see the OHV funds drained to run parks.

J – I think Board members should be there too so we can find out where they are coming from because they are the ones who are making the decisions.

DJ – I think we need to take the soft approach instead of loading a room with angry people who want to vent and not listen. We need to sit down with the Director and lay out our issues. We want to make sure that OHV funds don't continue to be used to run parks and that the money that has been taken gets replaced. If she is not receptive, then suggest that the program belongs somewhere else.

H – I would be happy to go meet with the Director.

DJ – I would be willing to go, too.

BA – If we need to move the program from State Parks, how would we go about it?

DJ – You should start with your State Legislator. See what they think it would take. Possibly talk to lobbyists, or Mike Annabel. Jerry Weiers would jump on board to move it to Game & Fish. G&F is more stable financially than most other State agencies and I think they want it.

H – G&F has started hiring the enforcement officers the legislation mandated. There seems to be more and more agencies getting involved like State Land and ADOT. My goal is to see OHVAG survive. We are needed out there.

BA – This is the only coordinated group that actually gets money to do anything for the OHV community.

J – Another goal should be to keep the money for OHV interests and not spread it around to environmental interests.

H – We need to make sure that those interests are represented on OHVAG with people we want, like Dave Moore and John Savino.

SP – You need to keep emphasizing that because this group supports responsible riding, you are representing environmental interests. It's not the responsible users causing environmental damage. You also allocate funds to mitigate resource damage. Because you advocate staying on trails and spend money to educate users, you are being environmentally responsible.

H – I was at a presentation earlier this week where G&F emphasized the importance of organized groups. Without them the OHV picture would be chaotic. This certainly acknowledges that G&F knows what's going on out there and would work with this group.

DJ – Support for the OHV sticker legislation has identified a solid group that holds some clout with legislators. ATV and dirt bike users are united in the interest of responsible use.

BB – Some OHV users aren't included in the sticker program.

BA – You guys still get the advantages of the program, trails, signage, maps without having to pay the fee.

H – That just makes it more important that we keep this group together.

DJ – And the representation that OHVAG contains must continue.

P – We need to identify all major OHV events throughout the year and see that someone from the group attends. Some kind of identifying uniform would be nice. OHVAG needs to enhance its identity.

SP – Maybe the group should review its mission statement. The statement should contain clear language that protection of the environment is important in sustaining availability of OHV areas and responsible use keeps Arizona "green".

DJ – Once again it is important to sustain the current makeup of the group. If the Parks Board wants more "green" representation, they need to develop a different committee. The focus of this group is OHV recreation issues. In California

environmentalists infiltrated the OHV commission and diverted the money to non-recreation projects.

DM – Another goal might be to develop relationships with the Parks Board members.

J – Do a better job of getting the group and our agenda out to the public. Part of the reason we are not getting applicants for the group is that no one knows who we are or the important work we do.

H – That starts with this group. We need to contact people we think would be interested and active in carrying out the duties of the group and recruit them.

SP – OHVAG can develop sub-committees to do its work. Each group member could chair a sub-committee to do projects they are interested in and recruit from that group. I assume you are reporting about OHVAG work to your organizations.

H – As Pete mentioned, we need to attend OHV events and make our mission visible.

SP – Maybe each group member should take one of the goals and chair a sub-committee to help accomplish it.

DM – Each member should come up with events they think are important and see that someone is there.

BB – Becky has more access to what is going on around the state than anyone else.

BB/BA – Is there money to purchase some identifying garments?

SP – We would have to identify what might be eligible as a “uniform” and see if OHV funds could be used that way.

BA – If you are addressing a group with some kind of logo uniform you tend to appear more credible.

8. PRESENTATION TO PARKS BOARD 11/13

H – I will take care of that. I would like Drew to join me there.

SP – I have provided the PowerPoint presentation from last year. Whatever you do the presentation should emphasize the good that is being done and that it needs to continue and the financial and emotional support of the Board are essential.

9. HOT WELL DUNES PRESENTATION – Deborah Morris

See attached slide show.

D. REPORTS

1. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Rogers thanked the Group for letting him serve as chair for the last two years and he looks forward to working with Pete and Rebecca.

2. STAFF REPORTS –

a) Parks Board Actions

SP – The Parks Board approved funding for the two BLM projects. Eagar was not included because we did not have funds available and their NEPA was not completed. The Eagar project is going to fall under a different sponsor and we will be presenting it to the Parks Board on November 13th.

The BLM Sonoran National Monument project that was approved has not moved forward yet. Their NEPA is completed, but they have not signed the Record of Decision yet because they are dealing with some legal issues and may not move forward with the project. We are giving their money to the Eagar project and will find money for them when they are ready.

J – I sat in on the grant rating and all of the projects were approved. Why did the two BLM projects get recommended and not the Eagar project?

SP – Eagar was requesting \$270k. We didn't have enough money available to fund all three, so the other two were recommended first.

J – What criteria did you use to drop Eagar off instead of one of the others?

SP – The Hassayampa was the highest scoring project, so it had priority. Since we couldn't fund it and Eagar, we included the small request from BLM AZ Strip.

H – We understand that our grant wasn't written as well as our past grant and we understand we will be funded eventually.

J – The issue is that we approved all three of the grants and I don't understand why it wasn't recommended.

SP – Funds are awarded based on the rating of the grants and the availability of funds. When we run out of funds, the lower scoring grants are not recommended. We knew we would be able to fund this project as 2009/2010 RTP money became available and the NEPA still needed to be approved. So, it wasn't ready for funding.

J – I guess we should have denied it in the rating process if the NEPA was not completed.

SP – The rating and recommendation is based on the project receiving NEPA approval. As long as it met the criteria requirement, it was eligible for funding consideration. We would

have recommended all three projects in September if the funds were available. Since I didn't know the status of the BLM Sonoran project at that time, we didn't have money for all three projects.

b) Status of RTP Funds

SP – The federal budget for highway projects is operating under a continuing resolution for 31 days. That ends October 31st.

Typically, they will extend the continuing resolution for 30 days or more until they get a new bill passed. From what we are hearing the RTP will be included in any new transportation bill and should receive more dollars. Depending on the status of the economy, Congress can always rescind a portion of the money the appropriate.

H – Keep us updated as you find out what's happening.

SP – As we discussed under the criteria review issue, we plan to have a grant cycle a little later in the year when we know the future of the legislation. When we get the Eagar project funded and find out if BLM is going to use the money they were awarded and we see what the 2010 and 2011 revenues will be, we will be able to offer that money for grant projects. I expect the amount to exceed \$1million. We may not be able to present the projects to the group before they are rated as we have done in the past, but you will get an overview when the funding recommendation is presented. And we will have an OHVAG member sitting in on the rating process.

c) Reimbursement

SP – No change in that. None of the advisory committee or Parks Board volunteers are receiving travel expense reimbursement.

E. CALL TO THE PUBLIC
H – No public is present.

F. CURRENT EVENTS / MATTERS OF BOARD PROCEDURES / ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA
DJ – I'd like to see some facts and figures from OHV sticker sales. How many were sold?

G. TIME & DATE FOR NEXT MEETING
SP – Pending Hank's meeting with the Director, we will see when one is needed. No meeting is scheduled at this time.
H – Fridays still work the best for everyone.
BA – That helps me attend.

H. ADJOURNMENT
BB – Motion to adjourn.
P – Second.
Chair Rogers adjourned the meeting at 3:41 pm.